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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE PROTEST TO ENGLAND

"WE are fully aware," says the *Spectator*, generously, while ducking its head to dodge a Zeppelin bomb, "that it is a much easier job to be a belligerent than a neutral." Moreover, it continues, "looking ahead, it is just as well that we should take account of the possibility that in some future war England may herself be a neutral State, and as anxious to uphold the rights of neutrals as America now is."

This is quite characteristic of British prudence, and we doubt not voices the sentiment of the British nation. Nevertheless, the *Spectator* continues with friendly frankness:

It is unfortunate that the American Government, acting admittedly under a purely commercial pressure, should have protested against the action of the British Fleet, and said not a word about the conduct of the German Army. In many important instances the German military forces have violated Conventions which were drawn up at The Hague by representatives of all the Powers of the world, including the representatives of the United States. As the greatest and most powerful of all neutral States in the present war, America was under a peculiar obligation to do all that she could to insist upon the sanctity of The Hague Conventions. We do not suggest for a moment that America should have gone to war, though even that step would have been justified according to the code of ethics which prevails among individuals in every civilized country. A bystander is, in this country, at any rate, and we fancy in most countries, under a distinct legal obligation to interfere to prevent crime. Judged by The Hague code, crimes have been committed by Germany, and the American Government have not interfered; they have not even protested. There can be little doubt that the mass of the American people, as well as people on this side of the Atlantic, would have attached even greater importance to President Wilson's present protest against British naval action if that protest had been preceded or accompanied by an equally strong protest against Germany's breaches of The Hague Convention.

This also is a wholly temperate expression of British opinion. Only those—of whom we happen to be one—who have sources of private information can realize how resentful, even bitter, the English really feel at our refusal to protest against Germany's conduct. That Mr. Roosevelt should put aside such an opportunity to attack

the Administration as "pusillanimous" was too much to expect. In the course of his latest somewhat labored defense of his own "taking" of Panama, he says:

The United States Government has signally failed to take action on behalf of Belgium when The Hague Conventions, to which the United States was a signatory power, were violated at Belgium's expense. During the last century no civilized power guiltless of wrong has suffered such a dreadful fate as has befallen Belgium. Belgium had not the smallest responsibility for the disaster that has overwhelmed it. The United States has been derelict to its duty, has signally failed to stand for international righteousness and international peace in the course it has pursued with reference to the wrongs of Belgium.

He had said as much before far more violently, but, so far as we have observed, has failed to arouse public opinion to a degree worth noticing. Technically, as we suppose everybody knows, the President is fully justified by the proviso in The Hague Convention which distinctly relieves us of obligation to take any action whatever that might conflict with our traditional policy of non-interference. Mr. Roosevelt doubtless is well aware of this fact, although he is careful never to mention it in any of his diatribes. His ground for "butting in" is broader and what we presume he would designate as "moral."

The common sense of the situation is that if we should enter upon the realm of protest against doings on the Continent upon *ex parte* evidence, there would be no end of the business and no end of trouble all around. Interference with our own established rights as neutral shippers of products is another matter entirely. Methods of warfare between England and Germany are their affair, but disturbance of trade relations between this and other neutral nations is distinctly ours—and the circumstance that it happens to be England instead of Germany with whom we have to deal, because it is she who controls the seas, does not concern us one way or the other. The most rabid of English objectors, even Mr. Roosevelt himself, does not venture to suggest that we would treat Germany differently.

The distinction is quite clear and the President is wholly right, as the country fully realizes, while rejoicing that it is he and not another of more truculent and meddlesome spirit who is charged with the difficult task of guiding our ship of state through a seething whirlpool of contending forces.

WE DEFEND SECRETARY BRYAN

THINGS have come to a pretty pass when a Jacksonian Democrat cannot chase rabbits and offices without evoking a storm of criticism from a hypercritical press. And yet a wholly casual indulgence in those innocuous pursuits has produced a veritable cloudburst upon the head of that other animated conservative who holds in the hollow of

his hand the destinies of American diplomacy. Who is it that instigates these virulent attacks upon our devoted Secretary of State? The liquor interests, probably. They are said to be wholly destitute of conscience and consideration. But we—meaning, of course, the reader and ourselves—are not. We wish to be fair and just. So let us consider the facts.

Take first the futile rabbit-hunt. Mr. Bryan was tired and the various Ambassadors were tired, too; so he decided to take a day off and pay a visit to his friend Colonel Barbour down in Fairfax County, Virginia. "Clad in hunting-garb," according to the pestiferous newspapers, "the two tramped hills and dales nearly all day," only to return empty-handed. "Didn't even see a track," the Secretary remarked resentfully when the report was shown to him.

Nevertheless, the vigilant Game Warden, probably one of the few Republicans left in Virginia, rose in his wrath and announced his intention to prosecute the unlucky hunters to the full extent of the outraged statutes.

"Can we officers," he demanded, "hale into court humble wood-choppers for violations of the law, see them pay their hard-earned money into the coffers of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and then with any degree of satisfaction stand idly by and wink at violations of the same law when the violators are men occupying exalted positions in their community or in the affairs of the nation? Personally speaking, I cannot, and if witnesses can be found to testify to the fact of the reported violation of the law by Secretary Bryan and his host, I shall at once ask for a warrant for their arrest. There is entirely too much of a spirit of antagonism already among the masses in regard to privileges granted to the classes to allow this matter to go unnoticed."

"Um, um!" ejaculated Mr. Bryan.

"I have the highest personal regard for the two gentlemen," the Warden concluded, firmly, "but if they have violated the law, I shall do my duty. The people must rule."

And what happened? Nothing. The very next day it was discovered that the law was off at the time, and did not apply to non-residents, anyway.

But this scandal had hardly begun to subside when another arose.

It seems that through some inadvertence Chairman William F. McCombs actually obtained a place for one of his campaign-helpers—Mr. Walker Whiting Vick—who was designated to sit at the seat of customs in San Domingo. Simultaneously the Secretary of State obtained the appointment of Mr. James M. Sullivan, a faithful bi-partisan, as Minister to the same discolored republic. It never crossed Mr. Bryan's mind that the spirits of the two distinguished officials might be torn by unbecoming antagonism. They were all Democrats together. But to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding and mayhap to forestall others, if need be, the Secretary took pen in hand and indited the following candid epistle:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON,

HON. WALKER W. VICK,

August 20, 1913.

Santo Domingo, D. R.

MY DEAR MR. VICK,—Now that you have arrived and are acquainting yourself with the situation, can you let me know what positions you have at your disposal with which to reward deserving Democrats? Whenever you desire a suggestion from me in regard to a man for any place there, call on me.

You have had enough experience in politics to know how valuable workers are when the campaign is on and how difficult it is to find suitable rewards for all the deserving. I do not know to what extent a knowledge of Spanish is necessary for employees. Let me know what is required, together with the salary, and when appointments are likely to be made.

Sullivan will be down before long and you and he together ought to be able to bring about such reforms as may be necessary there. You will find Sullivan a strong, courageous, reliable fellow. The more I have seen of him the better satisfied I am that he will fit into the place there and do what is necessary to be done.

W. J. BRYAN.

Although seemingly done under the pressure of other official duties as hurriedly, well, let us say, as the President's recent speech, the communication is admirably expressed. Its explicitness in particular is really noteworthy. Observe, for example, the fine distinction between "deserving" and undeserving Democrats. The former, in point of fact, "*all* of the deserving," are entitled to "suitable rewards," while the latter—*i. e.*, presumably the so-called Clark Democrats—need not be considered. And yet, since even among the faithful there are varying degrees of worth, it was essential to know what qualifications, if any, were desirable, what were the various salaries, and how soon the appointments could be made. It was quite natural that Mr. Bryan should make straightforward inquiries respecting these details, and he did; how else, pray, could he have obtained the requisite information?

Unhappily, the Collector and His Excellency were unable to sustain amicable relations for long, and the consequence is a painstaking investigation now proceeding under the direction of the newly elected Senator from California, Mr. Phelan, who originally was to have represented the War Department, but finally concluded, in response to a hint from Secretary Tumulty, to pose for the State Department instead. It was in the course of this inquiry that Mr. Bryan's ingenuous communication was revealed, and pandemonium immediately possessed the punctilious American press.

"Even Charles F. Murphy," shouted the *World*, "would have hesitated to send that kind of a letter to a subordinate Tammany official. He would have regarded it as too raw." And the worst of it is that it is "not Mr. Bryan who is discredited, but the Wilson Administration." The *Times*, too, declared with quite unaccustomed heat that the letter would "take its place in the chronicles of evil politics," that it was "a humiliation for the country and for every

decent man" and additional evidence that Mr. Bryan was "holding an office he is utterly incompetent to fill." So, too, the Springfield *Republican* stood aghast at the Secretary's "pachydermous and benighted attitude," and pronounced the damage done to the Administration "irreparable." It did not quite see how the President can take his political life in his hands by asking Mr. Bryan to resign; and yet "if there is faltering and weakness the episode may be very widely regarded as a sign that the Administration, overwhelmed by its growing accumulation of troubles, finally is headed for political ruin."

All this, along with much more of the same tenor from all parts of the country, except God's part of it in the South and Middle West, sounds very ominous indeed. But "I should worry," smilingly remarks the unruffled Secretary, adding, with a hearty laugh:

I am glad to have the public know that I appreciate the services of those who work in politics and feel an interest in seeing them rewarded, and, as Mr. Vick received his appointment for political work, I thought he was a good man to address and express my opinion on the subject.

Then pinning his pachydermous hat down to his ear-tops, he saunters over to the White House to confer with the President and Mr. J. P. Morgan about rates of exchange. And there you are.

"Why retain Mr. Bryan?" demands the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. Why? Read your *Commoner*, friend editor. If you do not receive it, read the following from the latest number:

THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

The President, in his great speech at Indianapolis, to be found on another page, presents the gospel of hope. While Republican reactionaries are mourning and moaning over the successful attacks on privilege and favoritism, the President orders another charge. In his own felicitous style he defends the laws already passed and announces a progressive programme for the future. Forward, march! is the command, and the party is with him.

* * * *

The President is a little hard on the stand-patters, but he does not hit them a lick amiss. They deserve it.

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Who says the President does not understand the Mexican situation? The Huertaites in the United States will not make any political capital out of watchful waiting.

* * * *

PLUTOCRACY IS BRAYING AGAIN

* * * *

OUR PRESIDENT

Patient and calm, in silent strength serene,
Amidst the storms a beacon tower—
Friend, fellow-citizen, and President,
To whom we give imperial power,—

All eyes where breakers roar to him are turned,
 Unc owned world-leader of the hou .

Imbued with Washington's ennobling aims,
 And J fferson's democracy—
 Whi h sees God's image in the common man—
 And F anklin's wise simplicity,
 He acts with Jackson's firm, unbending will

True, there may be a prescient note in this:

Then let us hope on, tho' the way be long,
 And the darkness be gathering fast;
 For the turn in the road is a little way on,
 Where the home lights will greet us at last—

though we guess not for the present, mebbe.

But—"Why retain Bryan"? The sillies!

The *London Times* makes much of the following from the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*:

The real injury to American commerce was inflicted, in the first place, by the Treasury Department when it ordered that manifests were not to be made public until thirty days after the vessel had sailed. Mr. McAdoo conceived the brilliant idea that it was unfair for British agents to discover the shipment of contraband cargoes. Unfair to whom? Such cargoes in international law are transported at owner's risk. Did the Secretary to the Treasury propose to make the Government a partner in the enterprise of selling contraband? Did he regard it as unfair to Germany if Great Britain, by her control of the sea, was able to seize them? Is this the Administration version of neutrality? Unfairness was shown to American shippers whose goods were not liable to seizure. Great Britain had made it perfectly plain that she wished to interfere with American commerce as little as possible. Mr. McAdoo made interference inevitable.

That matter came up in the Senate at the time. If we are not mistaken, Mr. Root asked, rather sharply, why the order was made. He could see no occasion for it and felt sure it would make trouble. Whereupon one of the "able" Democratic Senators, as Mr. J. Hamilton Lewis invariably calls them—we forget which—retorted that the order was issued after due lack of consideration by the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Joseph of Egypt, and consequently it was no part of the business of the Senator from New York to ask why. Overwhelmed by the completeness of the explanation, Mr. Root threw up his hands in apparent disgust and let it go at that. That is the way we recall the incident. And now the chicken has come home to roost at the very moment when Mr. McAdoo is egging his trusting father-in-law on to jam through another bill in the interest of builders of ships to be bought by the Government and sent forth in search of more trouble. Sometimes we wish Joseph would come back.

Miss or Mrs. Kate H. Rowe writes to inquire:

From the very strict orders to the Democrats, in the Indianapolis speech, what has become of "The New Freedom"? Please answer in *THE REVIEW*, as we are anxious to know, and feel sure you can explain

It is only two years older; that is all.

From the morning mail:

SIR,—I am a member of a committee in charge of a division of the "Emergency Campaign" of the Charity Organization Society to raise fifty thousand dollars this week, to enable it to meet the unusual demands for charitable relief in this city which are now being made upon it as a result of the hard times. We believe the emergency is a serious one and calls for liberal action by public-spirited citizens.

The committee would very much appreciate a contribution from you. Cheques should be drawn to the order of the treasurer, and sent in the inclosed envelope. If you wish, a representative of the committee will call upon you and present the situation more fully. Thanking you in advance for any share you take in helping us meet the emergency, I am, etc.

A sample of many. Respectfully referred to the Secretary of Unprecedented Commerce, Unemployed Labor, and Uncommon Prosperity.

We find in *Brooklyn Life*:

The American people will decide in 1916 whether they approve of President Wilson's administration or not, if that is what he meant; but they, or at least all who heard or have read his speech in Indianapolis, have already formed an opinion as to the merits of what he there said. The opinion of the press as a whole is not flattering, but, according to his own statement, he never takes his ideas from editorials, not even, it must be presumed, from those of the Honorable Josephus Daniels or the Honorable W. J. Bryan, much less from those of his good friend Colonel Harvey. Evidently in his opinion editors do not reflect the views of the people of whom he is so passionately fond.

And we reply that, so far as we are concerned, we do not pretend to speak anybody's opinions except our own. Brother Bryan, we confess, is a reflector, and Josephus—well, Josephus is a reflection.

That Senator Weeks is being seriously mentioned as one of the available Republicans for the Presidential nomination next year is the discovery of the Washington correspondent of the *Boston Advertiser*.—*Springfield Republican*.

Good news for the White House!